

George Green's School

Report To LA

Tuesday 28th June 2022

- **Proposed Redesignation of the Specialist Resource Provision**
- **Proposed Closure of the Existing Hydro Pool**

1 Context

Following detailed preliminary discussion involving the Principal, senior staff at the school, governors and the LA, the school went out to six weeks Stage 1 consultation on two separate matters on 9th May 2022.

The 2 matters being consulted on were as follows:

Specialist Resource

- (a) To change the designation of the existing George Green's specialist resource from Complex Needs to Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC).
- (b) To increase the total number of places from 15 to 20.

Hydro Pool

- (c) To close the existing hydro pool facility as part of the rebuilding of George Green's School.

The consultation process was publicised to staff, parents/carers, students and the wider local community, including local feeder primary schools. A proposed online meeting on the 18th May 2022, to discuss the proposals and respond to any questions was widely publicised but there was no attendance at this meeting.

A consultation response form was made available on the school's website, which could be responded to either electronically or in hard copy.

Only 9 consultation responses were received.

Responses to the consultation were considered and fully discussed by a quorate meeting of the Full GB on Wednesday 22nd June.

2 Summary of Consultation Responses

The 9 respondents variously identified themselves by category as follows:

- Parent of a child on roll at GG (5)
- Local resident (1)
- Member of staff at GG (1)

- SENDCO at a local primary school (1)
- Governor (1)

In relation to the proposed redesignation of the specialism, 8 declared themselves to be in favour of the proposal and 1 against.

In relation to the proposed increase from 15 places to 20 places, no respondent offered any comment in on this.

In response to the proposal to close the hydro pool as part of the rebuilding of GG, only 4 respondents offered any comment, with 2 in favour and 2 opposed.

See spreadsheet summary of responses received attached as Appendix 5.

Please note also the details included in Appendix A – to be found at the end of this report.

3 GB Recommendation to LA

An extraordinary meeting of the GB was convened on Wednesday 22nd June solely to discuss the outcomes of the Stage 1 consultation and agree next steps.

17 governors were in attendance, with only 4 unable to attend. The meeting was therefore fully quorate.

The clerk to the Governors was also in attendance.

Having carefully considered all the responses to the Stage 1 consultation, the governors in attendance unanimously agreed to support element 1 of the proposal (re-designation) and element 2 (increase from 15 to 20 places).

In relation to element 3 of the proposals (hydro pool closure), governors agreed in principle to the closure of the hydro pool – subject only to final agreement from the school trustees, the majority of which are also serving governors.

Appendix A: Commentary on specific objections/concerns raised during Stage 1 consultation

Q1 Do you agree with the proposal to change the designation of the George Green's resource base from Complex Needs to Autism Spectrum Condition?

Respondent 6 of 9 : *Why should it only be students with autism? This is not fair cos this is not being a rights respecting school. Basically you don't want any other children cos you can't be bothered to facilitate for them. You're getting rid of all wheelchair users from now on and only autistic children can come. What the point?*

This response misunderstands the school's intentions. Amending the designation will not in itself prevent any student who is a wheelchair user; or who has special educational needs, which are not autism, from enrolling at the school. The school already has students who are wheelchair students enrolled in mainstream classes and has a variety of pupils in mainstream classes with other special educational needs, such as Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs.

Respondent 1 of 9 : *My only concern is if a child within the autism spectrum has a sensory overload for example. They can be very vocal and physical. This can be very disturbing to the other students around and therefore be extremely distracting, taking affect on their learning. I mean I hope that the support that is needed for the child with autism, and the way the child expresses within the classroom, does not distract the whole of the lesson for everyone or out more pressure on the teacher.*

It should be noted that this respondent answered yes to Q1 but has added this comment as a side concern. The school will continue its existing practice of looking to integrate students enrolled within the specialist resource provision as much as possible into mainstream lessons, supported as appropriate by eg TAs – however, at the same time, retaining the option for students in the resource provision to sometimes being taught in smaller groups, where this is clearly in the best interests of both themselves and their peers.

Q5 Do you agree with the proposal to NOT include a hydro pool in George Green's new school building?

Against :

Respondent 6 of 9 : *My child uses the hydro pool not for leisure but cos she can't do PE. Again you're not thinking this through properly.*

Principal confirms that there are currently no students on roll at GG who are unable to access PE. In the event that there ever were, the school would

make appropriate alternative arrangements, in the same way that any school would.

Respondent 9 of 9 : *Mainly because we have been using the pool for as long as I can remember. Our children with EHCPs really benefit. In addition, we are a small school with very limited resources on site and rely heavily on this pool to meet the needs of our pupils. In addition, I disagree that GG pupils will not need the Hydro pool if it becomes an autism specialist school. Water therapy is very useful and a great way to regulate children's emotions. It also provides a good sensory input for children with autism. I think it can be used.*

On an individual basis, the school completely sympathises with this respondent's position. (SENDCO at a nearby local primary school.). It is entirely understandable that the staff, students and parents of that school would prefer the hydro pool facility to continue. However, it remains the case that its continuance would be directly against the interests of the vast majority of students currently on roll at GG or likely to be on roll into the future.

In favour :

Respondent 7 of 9 : *It's not financial viable. Not enough students use it.*

Respondent 8 of 9 : *With the cut backs schools are facing from the government each year, the school has got to make sure their budget is being used resourcefully. 10,000 is a lot of money the school has to use from their budget because the hydro-pool is running at a loss. This money could be used more on resources, staff and equipment.*

The school strongly agrees with both the above comments. A hydro pool would be very nice to have if unlimited funds available. However, given that is not the situation, the school continues to feel that the expenditure currently incurred by the running of a hydro pool could be deployed far more effectively elsewhere – as could the space that will otherwise be occupied by the pool within the finite boundaries of the new building.